

Testimony of
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September 19, 2006

STATEMENT
OF
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BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
UNITED STATES SENATE
CONCERNING
"THE COST OF CRIME:
UNDERSTANDING THE FINANCIAL AND HUMAN IMPACT
OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY"
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Statement of
Harley G. Lappin
Director
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United States Senate
"The Cost of Crime:
Understanding the Financial and Human Impact of Criminal Activity"
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Good Morning Chairman Specter, Senator Leahy, and Members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss a variety of issues regarding the cost of crime as it pertains to the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP).

We realize that considerable taxpayer resources are devoted to funding our agency, and we make every effort to use those resources wisely. All of our operations, activities, and initiatives are driven by our mission -- protecting public safety through the secure and safe confinement of inmates, as well as returning productive and crime-free ex-offenders to their communities. The post-release success of offenders is as important to public safety as inmates' secure incarceration.

We face a number of challenges that affect our ability to fulfill this mission. Most of these challenges relate to the growth and changing composition of the Federal inmate population -- two factors over which we have no control. Adding to our reentry challenges is the fact that

virtually all Federal inmates will be released back into our communities at some point. Most will need some type of job training, work experience, education, counseling, and other life skills and self-improvement programs while incarcerated -- such as drug abuse treatment, anger management, and parenting -- if they are to successfully reenter society.

Currently, there are approximately 192,000 inmates in BOP custody. Most of these inmates (53.6%) are serving sentences for drug trafficking offenses. The remainder of the population consists of inmates convicted of weapons offenses (14.3%), immigration law violations (10.4%), violent offenses (8.9%), fraud (4.1%), property crimes (3.8%), sex offenses (2.2%), and other miscellaneous offenses (2.7%). The average sentence length for inmates in BOP custody is 9.6 years. Approximately seven percent of inmates in the BOP are women, and approximately 27 percent are not U.S. citizens.

The Cost of Safe and Secure Facilities

Approximately 85 percent of the BOP inmate population is confined in Bureau-operated institutions, while 15 percent is housed in facilities under contract with the BOP, primarily private sector prisons. The BOP operates 113 institutions at four security levels -- minimum, low, medium, and high -- and one maximum-security prison for the less than 1 percent of the inmates who require that level of security. This graduated security scheme allows us to assign an inmate to an institution in accordance with his or her individual security needs. These needs are determined by our validated, objective inmate classification system, which yields an inmate security classification of minimum, low, medium, and high. Inmates also are designated to particular facilities that meet program needs or other requirements (such as health care); and we operate a number of detention centers that confine pre-trial and pre-sentenced offenders.

Classifying inmates appropriately and designating them to institutions of the appropriate security level is critical to the Bureau's ability to operate in a cost efficient manner. It is least costly to confine inmates in minimum security facilities, and it becomes more expensive as the security level of the institution increases. Specialized facilities, such as medical referral centers and detention centers, cost even more to operate. Costs are driven primarily by the number and type of staff needed to ensure the safe and secure operation of the institutions at the different security levels and to provide the appropriate programs and any specialized care needed by inmates. Examples of some specific programs and services that we provide are residential drug abuse treatment, specialized medical care, and programs for females who have suffered trauma in their lives.

For all security levels, the BOP's average daily cost per inmate is \$64.19. We also contract for bedspace to house low-security criminal aliens. The average daily cost for these facilities is \$61.57. The BOP's average daily cost for our low-security facilities is \$52.58. At privately-operative facilities under contract with the BOP, the average daily cost is \$60.65.

The overall cost per inmate includes the cost of providing housing, food, clothing, programs, and medical care for inmates; as well as the cost of staff salaries and benefits, staff training, telecommunications, utilities, purchases of goods and services, and policy and oversight provided by administrative offices across the country. Approximately 70 percent of the BOP's total operational budget (the Salaries and Expenses portion) is devoted to funding staff salaries

and benefits. In FY 2005, the BOP's enacted budget for Salaries and Expenses was almost \$4.6 billion; for FY 2006, it was \$4.8 billion; and our FY 2007 request is for \$4.9 billion.

We receive separate Buildings and Facilities appropriations which cover the costs associated with the maintenance, repair, and expansion of existing institutions and the new institution construction program. Amounts appropriated for this program are as follows: \$205 million was enacted in FY 2005, \$99.9 million in FY 2006, and the FY 2007 request is \$117.1 million.

Like many Federal agencies at this time, we are under fiscal constraints and have been making adjustments to our operations to allow us to continue to operate safe and secure prisons at substantially reduced costs. We have undertaken a number of specific cost containment initiatives over the past few years.

Our general approach toward cost reduction has included reviewing programs, services, and operations and discontinuing those that are determined to be unnecessary or not cost effective; consolidating and centralizing services; and eliminating management and non-management positions. We have been able to achieve considerable savings through the elimination of 2,405 positions based on these cost reduction initiatives. We have not and will not, however, make changes to institution staffing or operations if it will compromise the safety and security of our facilities. We undertook these cost reduction initiatives to be able to continue to expand capacity -- through new construction and smart utilization of available state, local, and private bedspace -- to meet the increasing inmate population, to reduce crowding, and to staff positions that have direct contact with inmates. We are currently completing construction on several facilities and contracting out, as appropriate, for low security and community-based facilities.¹

Some of our restructuring and reorganization initiatives are already completed or are well underway. These include:

¹ A recent report by Abt Associates (completed pursuant to a grant from the National Institute of Justice (NIJ)) regarding the private prison demonstration project of the Taft Correctional Institution concluded that the private sector operated the Taft Correctional Institution in an acceptable manner at much lower cost as compared to what it would have cost the Federal government to operate the institution. The BOP disagrees with both of these conclusions. The overall costs were computed using inappropriate overhead costs (Abt assumed 12%, while the actual costs ranged from 3.48% to 5.22%), and the review of performance substantially de-emphasized serious operational difficulties. The Bureau of Prisons' evaluation of Taft, including a detailed report prepared by an independent economist under contract with BOP, found that the private sector operated Taft at nearly the same cost as BOP would have operated it (a difference of 2.6%), but at a much reduced level of performance. Based on a more expansive review of performance (including all serious inmate misconduct rather than a few select measures as was done in the NIJ report), the BOP found that the private sector's operation of Taft was deficient in certain aspects, and generally at the low end of the acceptable spectrum in the context of all Federal low-security prisons.

?? Closing four outmoded and costly stand-alone, minimum- security Federal prison camps.

?? Centralizing and automating human resource management and financial management functions.

?? Consolidating and centralizing our inmate designation and sentence computation functions.

?? Eliminating management positions in the Central Office and our regional offices.

?? Consolidating management positions at co-located or proximate institutions.

?? Reducing management layers to increase the efficiency of decision making and the effectiveness of managing staff and inmates.

?? Implementing a medical classification system and adjusting health services staffing to match the classification of the facility.

?? Implementing a correctional services roster management initiative to better manage staff resources at the institution level and to help reduce overtime expenditures.

?? Discontinuing the Intensive Confinement Center programs at three locations.

Despite these efforts, we are faced with continuing challenges because our costs are driven primarily by factors that are outside of our control. These factors include: the increasing inmate population, the escalating cost of utilities and fuel, and the cost of particular services, most notably health care.

We recognize and take very seriously our responsibility for ensuring that taxpayers' dollars entrusted to us are spent wisely and accounted for properly. For seven consecutive years, the BOP has received a "clean" opinion on its Audited Financial Statements and we are committed to continuing this record in the future. We believe it is extremely important to account for every dollar spent.

The Federal Inmate Population

As I just mentioned, our funding needs are driven primarily by the increasing inmate population. The most significant increases in the inmate population have occurred in the last two decades.

However, evidence suggests that population growth has actually slowed over the last three years, although we saw an increase of over 7,000 inmates per year during the last two years.

In 1930 (the year the Bureau was created), we operated 14 institutions for just over 13,000 inmates. By 1940, the Bureau had grown to 24 institutions and 24,360 inmates. The number of inmates did not change significantly for 40 years. In 1980, the total population was 24,252 inmates.

From 1980 to 1989, the inmate population more than doubled, from just over 24,000 to almost 58,000. This resulted from law enforcement efforts along with legislative reform of the Federal criminal justice system and the creation of a number of mandatory minimum penalties. During the 1990s, the population more than doubled again, reaching approximately 136,000 at the end of 1999 as we felt the effect of efforts to combat illegal drugs, firearms violations, and illegal

immigration. In addition, shortly after the National Capital Revitalization and Self-Government Improvement Act of 1997 became law, we began transferring sentenced felons from the District of Columbia into our custody, as well as accepting custodial responsibility of newly-sentenced D.C. felon inmates.

Our current population of more than 192,000 inmates is expected to increase to over 221,000 by the end of FY 2011.

Crowding

The size of the BOP inmate population exceeds the rated capacity of our prisons. Currently, we are at 36 percent above rated capacity, systemwide. Over the past several years, we have been able to increase the number of beds and take a variety of steps to mitigate the effects of crowding in our facilities. For instance, we have improved the architectural design of our newer facilities and have taken advantage of improved technologies in security measures such as perimeter security systems, surveillance cameras, drug detection systems, and body alarms. These technologies support BOP employees' ability to provide inmates the supervision they need in order to maintain security and safety in our institutions.

We have also enhanced population management and inmate supervision strategies in areas such as classification and designation, intelligence gathering, gang management, use of preemptive lockdowns, controlled movement, and staff training. We are using these measures to their greatest extent, and they have been very helpful.

The Importance of Prison Architecture

The architecture of our prisons greatly impacts our ability to control costs. We have 35 institutions that are 50 years old or older. These institutions present significant modernization and repair costs that we have to attend to year after year and are a part of our annual budget request. These facilities are less amenable to some of the technological and architectural improvements afforded through the design of our newer institutions.

Beginning in the early 1970s with the construction of the Federal Correctional Institution in Morgantown, West Virginia, we changed our basic prison architectural design to support the principle of direct supervision of inmates -- a principle that the BOP and other correctional agencies have held since that time. Our contemporary prison design affords greater efficiency in staffing because it allows staff to oversee increased numbers of inmates and results in a more efficient inmate-to-staff ratio.

This is especially important in relation to our emphasis on inmate programs and our "correctional worker first" philosophy. Regardless of the specific discipline in which a staff member works, all employees are "correctional workers first." This means that everyone is responsible for the security of the institution. All staff are expected to be vigilant and attentive to inmate accountability and security issues, to supervise the inmates working in their area or participating in their program, to respond to emergencies, and to maintain a proficiency in custodial and security matters, as well as in their particular job specialty.

All employees in our institutions are law enforcement officers. This means both custody and non-custody staff are responsible for inmate supervision and institution security. As a result, we do not require the level of custody staff in program areas. In some State correctional systems where custody staff are distinguished from non-custody staff, classrooms, work areas, and recreation areas must have a correctional officer as well as the teacher, work supervisor, or recreation specialist. Using the "correctional worker first" concept has allowed us to operate with a custody staff-to-inmate ratio (1 to 10.1) that is more than double the average (1 to 4.7) of the five largest State correctional systems. This reduced custody staffing allows us to maintain a substantial number of staff who provide inmate programs, giving offenders the opportunity to gain critical skills and training necessary for a successful return to society. And the programs work.

Recidivism

The Bureau of Justice Statistics has reported that between 1983 and 1994, the recidivism rate for inmates released from State prisons increased from 62 percent to 67 percent. Over approximately the same time period, the recidivism rate for inmates released from Federal correctional facilities declined by 10 percent (from 44% to 40%). We are confident that this success is due in part to the effectiveness of our inmate programs.

Inmates should be held responsible for the behavior that led to their incarceration and for participating in self-improvement programs that will provide them with the skills they need to be productive, law-abiding citizens upon release. We provide many self-improvement programs, including work in prison industries and other institution jobs, vocational training, education, substance abuse treatment, religious observance, parenting, anger management, counseling, and other programs that impart essential life skills. We also provide other structured activities designed to teach inmates productive ways to use their time.

Preparation for reentry begins in the first days of an inmate's incarceration. The vast majority of our inmate programs and services are geared toward helping inmates prepare for their eventual release. The money spent on these programs (staff salaries) is money well spent. Our own rigorous research has found that inmates who participate in Federal Prison Industries are 24 percent less likely to recidivate and 14 percent more likely to be employed after release; inmates who participate in vocational or occupational training are 33 percent less likely to recidivate; inmates who participate in education programs are 16 percent less likely to recidivate; and inmates who complete the residential drug abuse treatment program are 16 percent less likely to recidivate and 15 percent less likely to relapse to drug use within three years after release.

A 2001 study by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy helps put these statistics into a cost-benefit context. That study was an evaluation of the costs and benefits of a variety of correctional, skills-building programs. The study examined program costs; the benefit of reducing recidivism by lowering costs for arrest, conviction, incarceration, and supervision; and the benefit by avoiding crime victimization.

The study was based only on valid evaluations of crime prevention programs, including the BOP's assessment of our industrial work and vocational training programs (the Post Release Employment Project study) and our evaluation of the Residential Drug Abuse Treatment program (the TRIAD study). The analysis includes the benefit-to-cost ratio for the programs that were

evaluated. The "benefit" is the dollar value of criminal justice system and victim costs avoided by reducing recidivism and the "cost" is the funds required to operate the correctional program. Regarding programs that we have found to have a positive effect on recidivism, the benefit-to-cost ratio of residential drug abuse treatment is as much as \$2.69 for each dollar invested in the program; for adult basic education, the benefit is as much as \$5.65; for correctional industries, the benefit is as much as \$6.23; and for vocational training, the benefit is as much as \$7.13.

Inmate Work Programs

Prison work programs teach inmates occupational skills and instill in offenders sound and lasting work habits and work ethics. All sentenced inmates in Federal correctional institutions are required to work (with the exception of those who for security, educational, or medical reasons are unable to do so). Most inmates are assigned to an institution job such as food service worker, orderly, plumber, painter, warehouse worker, or groundskeeper. Approximately 18 percent of the Bureau's eligible sentenced inmates work in Federal Prison Industries (FPI) factories -- one of the Bureau's most important correctional programs.

The goal of the FPI program is to provide inmates with job skills training and work experience, thereby reducing recidivism and avoiding undesirable idleness during these inmates' confinement. The FPI program creates the opportunity for inmates to gain specific work skills and a general work ethic -- both of which can lead to viable, sustained employment upon release -- through the day-to-day experience of working in one of a number of FPI factories.

Education, Vocational, and Occupational Training

The Bureau offers a variety of programs for inmates to achieve a level of literacy and to acquire marketable skills to help them obtain employment after release. All institutions offer literacy classes, English as a Second Language, adult continuing education, parenting classes, recreation activities, wellness education, and library services.

With a few exceptions, inmates who do not have a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate must participate in the literacy program for a minimum of 240 hours or until they obtain the GED. The English as a Second Language program enables inmates with limited proficiency in English to improve their English language skills. The Bureau also facilitates vocational training and occupationally-oriented higher education programs. A limited number of traditional college courses are also available to inmates. Inmates are required to pay for college courses.

Occupational and vocational training programs are based on the needs of the specific institution's inmate population, general labor market conditions, and institution labor force needs.

On-the-job training is afforded to inmates through formal apprenticeship programs, institution job assignments, and work in the FPI program.

Recreation and wellness activities encourage healthy life styles and habits. Institution libraries carry a variety of fiction and nonfiction books, magazines, newspapers, and reference materials. Inmates also have access to legal materials and legal services at their institution to allow them to conduct necessary legal research.

Substance Abuse Treatment

Inmates must participate in a drug abuse education course if:

- (1) there is evidence in their presentence investigation report that alcohol or drug use contributed to the commission of their offense;
- (2) they violated supervised release, parole, conditions of placement in a residential reentry center, or conditions of home confinement as a result of alcohol or drug use; or
- (3) the sentencing judge recommended that they participate in a drug abuse treatment program during incarceration.

Participants in the drug abuse education course learn the connection between drugs and crime; are taught to distinguish drug use, abuse, and addiction; and acquire the information they need to help them avoid criminal thinking errors. Inmates who need further treatment are encouraged to participate in non-residential or residential drug abuse treatment, as appropriate.

Non-residential drug abuse treatment is available in every Bureau institution. Specific populations targeted for non-residential treatment services include:

?? inmates with a relatively minor or low-level substance abuse impairment;

?? inmates with a more serious drug use disorder whose sentence does not allow sufficient time to complete the residential drug abuse treatment program;

?? inmates with longer sentences who are in need of treatment and are awaiting placement in the residential drug abuse treatment program;

?? inmates identified with a drug use history who did not participate in residential drug abuse treatment and are preparing for community transition; and inmates who completed the unit-based component of the residential drug abuse treatment program and are required to continue treatment until placement in a residential reentry center, where they will receive transitional drug abuse treatment.

The residential drug abuse treatment program is available in 57 Bureau institutions, offering treatment to approximately 18,000 inmates each year. The residential drug abuse treatment program provides intensive treatment five to six hours a day, five days per week, to inmates diagnosed with a drug use disorder. The programs are managed by a doctoral-level psychologist who supervises the treatment staff. Inmates are housed together in a unit that is reserved for drug abuse treatment. Treatment is provided for a minimum of 500 hours over nine months.

Treatment targets major criminal/drug-using risk factors, especially anti-social/pro-criminal attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors. The BOP targets these anti-social/pro-criminal behaviors by reducing anti-social peer associations; promoting positive family relationships; increasing self-control, self-management, and problem solving skills; ending drug use; and replacing behaviors such as lying, stealing, and aggression with pro-social alternatives.

We estimate that approximately 34 percent of BOP inmates have a drug use disorder and require residential drug abuse treatment. Although 53.4 percent of all BOP inmates are incarcerated

for drug trafficking offenses, these offenders are no more likely than any other type of inmate to require residential drug abuse treatment.

We provide residential drug abuse treatment to all inmates with a need who volunteer. The treatment, however, is provided toward the end of the sentence -- approximately 36 months before release. Accordingly, at any given time, there are a substantial number of inmates who are identified as having a need and yet are not enrolled in a residential drug abuse treatment program.²

Drug abuse treatment includes community transition treatment, which is provided as a treatment service to all inmates in a residential reentry center and is a required component of the residential drug abuse treatment program. As part of community transition treatment and to help ensure a seamless transition from the institution to the community, the Bureau provides a treatment summary to the residential reentry center where the inmate will reside, to the community-based treatment provider who will treat the inmate, and to the U.S. Probation Office before the inmate's arrival at the residential reentry center. Participants in community transition drug abuse treatment typically continue treatment during their period of supervised release after they leave Bureau custody.

Specific Pro-Social Values Programs

Based on the proven success of the residential substance abuse treatment program, we have implemented a number of other programs to address a variety of needs among certain segments of the inmate population (including younger offenders and high-security inmates). These programs use the same approach as the residential drug abuse treatment program. They focus on inmates' emotional and behavioral responses to difficult situations and emphasize life skills and the development of pro-

² Inmates who complete the residential drug abuse treatment program are 16 percent less likely to recidivate and 15 percent less likely to relapse to drug use within three years after release. social values, respect for self and others, responsibility for personal actions, and tolerance. Many of these programs have already been found to significantly reduce inmates' involvement in institution misconduct. The positive relationship between institution conduct and post-release success makes us hopeful about the ability of these programs to reduce recidivism.

Religious Programs

Bureau institutions accommodate religious services and programs for inmates of the approximately 30 faiths represented within the population. Religious programs are led or supervised by staff chaplains, contract spiritual leaders, and community volunteers. Chaplains oversee worship services and self-improvement programs, such as the study of sacred writings, spiritual development, and religious workshops. Bureau chaplains also provide pastoral care, spiritual guidance, and counseling to inmates. Upon request and approval, inmates may receive visits and spiritual counseling from community representatives.

Life Connections

The Life Connections Program is a residential multi-faith-based program that provides an opportunity for inmates to deepen their spiritual lives and integrate their faiths with other

dimensions of their lives in order to assist them with their personal growth and their reintegration into the community. The program strives to contribute to an inmate's personal transformation; to bring reconciliation to the inmate, his or her victims, and the community; and to reduce recidivism.

Life Connections programs are currently underway at FCI Petersburg, USP Leavenworth, FCI Milan, USP Terre Haute, and FMC Carswell. Our Office of Research and Evaluation has just completed the first stage of an analysis of the program and found a reduction in serious institution misconduct among program participants. The Office of Research will next assess the effect of the program on recidivism, once a sufficient number of graduates have been released for at least three years.

Inmate Skills Development Initiative

The Inmate Skills Development initiative is a comprehensive reentry strategy that the BOP has undertaken over the past few years. The Inmate Skills Development Branch coordinates efforts at implementing inmate skills development strategies within the BOP and with external agencies, especially the development of collaborative partnerships to assist with the community transition phase.

The three principles of the Inmate Skills Development strategy are: (1) inmate participation in programs must be linked to the development of relevant inmate reentry skills; (2) the focus is on acquiring or improving a skill identified through a comprehensive assessment, rather than simply completing a program; and (3) resources are allocated to target inmates with a high risk for reentry failure.

Health Promotion

The Bureau provides medically necessary health care to inmates in accordance with proven standards of care. We employ licensed and credentialed health care providers in our ambulatory care units, supported with contract services provided by community consultants and specialists. We operate several medical referral centers providing advanced care to inmates with chronic or acute medical conditions.

Over the past couple of years, we have implemented a medical classification system to identify inmate health care needs (medical, mental health, and forensic) and then assign inmates to facilities with appropriate health care capabilities, to include community health care resources. We stratified facilities and have realigned health services staff to maximize the use of our medical resources.

We emphasize health promotion in many aspects of our inmate health care programs, including counseling during examinations, education about the effect of medications, infectious disease prevention and education, and chronic care clinics for conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and hypertension. We promote environmental health through our emphasis on a smoke-free, clean-air environment and the maintenance of safe conditions in inmate living and work areas. In addition, our food service program emphasizes heart-healthy diets and nutrition education, and inmates receive dietary counseling in conjunction with their medical treatment.

Our recreation programs provide exercise opportunities to maintain cardiovascular and musculoskeletal health.

Mental Health Treatment and Counseling

The Bureau provides a full range of mental health treatment services through staff psychologists and psychiatrists, enhanced by contract services from community mental health professionals. Psychologists are available for professional counseling and treatment on an individual or group basis. In addition, staff in an inmate's living unit are available for informal counseling. We also provide a range of evaluative mental health and forensic services to the courts.

Maintaining Family Ties Through Visiting, Telephones, and Correspondence

We know how important it is for inmates to maintain contact with their family and friends while in prison -- research has shown that maintaining ties with family contributes to an offender's avoidance of crime following reentry. Visiting, telephone privileges, and correspondence are three activities that help inmates maintain family and community ties while incarcerated. Inmates may have contact visits with their family, friends, attorney, and other special visitors except in our administrative maximum security prison, where all visiting is non-contact. Inmates also maintain contact with the community through telephone calls. Over 90 percent of the calls are paid for by inmates; the other approximately 10 percent are made on a collect call basis. Except for pre-arranged calls to an attorney, all calls are recorded and are subject to monitoring by staff. Inmates also maintain outside contacts by writing and receiving letters. Staff inspect general mail for contraband and randomly read incoming mail for general security purposes. Staff do not read appropriately-identified special mail (from attorneys, Members of Congress, embassies and consulates, the courts, the Department of Justice, other Federal law enforcement officers, governors, and State attorneys general), but it is inspected for contraband in the presence of the inmate.

We are currently piloting an inmate messaging system called TRULINCS, which allows offenders to communicate with family and friends through use of electronic messaging via a secure work station. We believe this system, when fully implemented, will greatly reduce the amount of incoming and outgoing mail through the U.S. postal system. Each inmate is permitted to register up to 30 electronic addresses. All incoming and outgoing messages are screened for key words and assessed by investigative staff. If appropriate, the message is uploaded by staff and transmitted via the Web environment to the intended recipient. The system currently allows each message to be indexed for indefinite retention. This process affords our offender population a fast, "real world" communication outlet, while providing the agency with enhanced content monitoring controls. To date, the system infrastructure modifications are in place at 11 BOP facilities. Although still in the pilot stage, wardens and investigative staff report the system has greatly enhanced intelligence gathering efforts. We anticipate this pilot program will continue to be successful, and we will implement Bureauwide at all of our facilities in the next several months.

Specific Release Preparation Efforts

In addition to the wide array of inmate programs described above, the BOP provides a Release Preparation Program in which inmates become involved toward the end of their sentence. The program includes classes in resume writing, job seeking, and job retention skills. The program also includes presentations by officials from community-based organizations that help ex-inmates find employment and training opportunities after release from prison.

Release preparation includes other inmate transition services provided at our institutions, such as mock job fairs where inmates learn job interview techniques and community recruiters learn of the skills available among inmates. Qualified inmates may apply for jobs with companies that have job openings. Our facilities also help inmates prepare release portfolios, including a resume, education and training certificates, diplomas, education transcripts, and other significant documents needed for a successful job interview.

We have established employment resource centers in more than 60 institutions. Employment resource centers assist inmates with creating release folders to use in job searches; soliciting job leads from companies that have participated in mock job fairs; identifying other potential job openings; and identifying points of contact for information on employment references, job training, and educational programs.

We use residential reentry centers (also known as community corrections centers or halfway houses) to place inmates in the community prior to their release from custody in order to help them adjust to life in the community and find suitable post-release employment. These centers provide a structured, supervised environment and support in job placement, counseling, and other services. They allow inmates to gradually rebuild their ties to the community, and they allow correctional staff to supervise offenders' activities during this important readjustment phase. Some inmates are placed in home confinement for a brief period at the end of their prison terms -- they serve this portion of their sentences at home under strict schedules, curfew requirements, telephonic monitoring, and sometimes electronic monitoring. Research has shown that inmates who go through residential reentry centers are less likely to recidivate.

We recently enhanced our use of residential reentry centers by piloting a transitional skills program in five facilities across the United States. The nine-week transitional skills program includes counseling in areas such as dealing with authority figures, managing peer pressure, developing realistic expectations, developing a support network, and time management. All future residential reentry center contracts will be required to provide the transitional skills program.

Closing

The Bureau strives to be a good steward of taxpayers' money and to be cost conscious in our planning and decision making. As I noted above, there are some major factors that are out of our control and that affect the number and type of inmates coming into our system. Although considerable resources are needed to operate the Federal prison system because of the large inmate population, the funding devoted to this effort ensures the safety of staff, inmates, and the general public and helps reduce recidivism.

Chairman Specter, this concludes my formal statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other Members of the Committee may have.